

Wilkin County EQIP Local Work Group Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2005
Wilkin County Recycling Center

Members Present: Don Bajumpaa – Wilkin SWCD, Steve Cole – NRCS, Michael Steinhauer – NRCS, Bob Westfall – Farmer Representative, Karlo Etten – Wilkin SWCD Board, Carol Poppel – FSA, Bruce Poppel – Wilkin County Environmental, Kurt Krueger – FSA County Committee Representative.

Members Absent: Pete Waller – BWSR, Bruce Albright – BRRWD, Jack Frederichs – MPCA, Doug Hedtko – DNR.

Don opened up the EQIP listening session. There was no one present for the special EQIP listening session, nor had any comments, questions or input been received from the public prior to the meeting.

With no formal public input the local work group proceeded with their meeting at 9:05 a.m. He informed the group that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain input regarding the 2005 EQIP program in FY 2006.

Steve provided a summary and assessment of the 2003-2005 EQIP projects that were completed.

The group reviewed the local EQIP priority worksheet and made no formal changes. As a result, additional weighted factor or multiplier points will be awarded for erosion control (10x), water (quality) resource (7x), and wastewater/comprehensive nutrient management (5x). In addition, no-till (anywhere in the county) will receive 6 points under the additional local priority category.

Discussion was held regarding the incentive rates for practice standard 329A (no-till) and 329C (mulch till). The group felt that there should be a lower payment rate for practice 329C and requested that Steve inquire about the possibility of reducing the incentive payment from \$30 to \$15 per acre. The work group felt that this would encourage more landowners to participate in practice 329A and provide us with the opportunity to work with more program participants that choose to enroll under practice 329C, if there is a lack of interest in practice 329A.

Discussion was also held on the possibility of combining state cost share program funds with EQIP cost share to install practice standard 380 (field windbreaks). A couple of scenarios were discussed relevant to this scenario. The group's first choice would be to reduce the cost-share rate for practice standard 380 to 40% and piggy-back state cost-share funds at a rate not to exceed 50% to bring the total cost share rate for the two programs at a rate not to exceed 90%. If the EQIP cost share rate can not be lowered the state cost share rate would be adjusted to a rate not to exceed 90%. The group felt that this would make cost share funds for both programs go farther resulting in an increase in the number conservation program acres and program participants. Steve and Don will check into these options with their program coordinators and report back to the group.

The group discussed marketing opportunities in the coming months and will work together to get program details out to program participants.

With no other business the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.